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By STEVE CURRY
Wycombe 1 Bedford 1
F.A. Cup first round
second replay
(Third replay—Bedford on
Thursday)

NON-LEAGUE
3 Wycombe and Bedford, after 300 minutes of F.A. Cup football, are still deadlocked.

They go into a third first round replay at Bedford on Thursday.

When the 90 minutes of this second replay at Loakes Park ended last night, referee Arthur Dimond, of Harlow, began extra time, then immediately abandoned the match.

Officials of the two clubs wrangled for half an hour over where the next encounter must take place.

Finally Wycombe secretary Bill Hayter announced: "It's at Bedford."

Referee Dimond, covered in mud, said: "I could not let the match go on. The conditions were impossible. I couldn't even see the marking on the pitch."

Technically, as the match was abandoned, it should be replayed at Wycombe.

Farcical

But Ron Burgess, manager of Southern League Bedford, said: "But the replay could not have been held here. That pitch will not be fit in two weeks let alone two days."

The match, before an 8,000 crowd, was played in farcical conditions. Mist and driving rain enveloped the ground of the Isthmian League amateurs. The pitch, as the match went on, grew steadily worse and the exhausted players had difficulty in moving the ball through the clinging mud.

The teams were as evenly matched as the five hours football indicates, and another stalemate always looked likely. But the crowd found it thrilling football despite the mistakes caused by conditions.

It was a night for long-range shooting and both sides fired shots at the opposing goal from all angles and distances. Bedford's part-time professionals opened the score in the 25th minute with the type of fluke goal which could easily decide who plays Oxford United in the second round.

Hit post

DANNY PATON, Bedford, inside forward, beat four men and his shot hit an upright to rebound off Wycombe keeper John Maskell into the net. Seven minutes later Wycombe levelled with bearded KEITH SAMUELS heading home a Les Merrick corner.

Bedford missed a great chance of winning when a miskick by John Beck let in Chris Riley, but he shot straight at Maskell. Wycombe, too, let slip a winning chance. Samuels chased in to meet a centre from Paul Bates—but headed straight at Bedford.

Wycombe lose replay plea

PETER BLACKMAN

Bedford have rejected an appeal from Wycombe Wanderers that the F.A. Cup first round third replay to be played at Bedford on Thursday should be switched to Wednesday week.

The Southern League club's board of directors reached their decision after a special meeting. But they have agreed to a referee inspecting their pitch tomorrow to avoid any possibility of a postponement because of a water-logged ground.

I understand Bedford's view is that after 300 minutes football between the two clubs, spectator interest is high and that a week's delay before the next replay would hit the gate.

Wycombe asked for a later replay date because their players are exhausted and still face an important Isthmian League match at Sutton on Saturday.

Geoff Still, Bedford secretary, said: "The ground is drying out fast, but if there is a postponement the game will take place on Monday."

Wycombe's woe increased when they learned that there had been a break-in at their Loakes Park ground. There was damage to the club room, but the takings from the Bedford replay had been banked.

Tie undecided after five hours

Wycombe Wanderers 1, Bedford Town 1

Experience often plays an important part in cup football. It was certainly true last night at Wycombe, where the amateur internationals, Bates and Worley, took a big share of the honours. Wycombe's third draw with Bedford, after five hours of hard struggling, was a grand match.

At full time the referee decided that the pitch was no longer playable. Immediately the ball had been kicked off for extra time, he abandoned the match. It was a fair result and a wise decision. The third replay will be on Thursday at a venue to be decided today by the F.A.

PATTERN SET

There were plenty of thrills, most of them caused by mistakes in defence on a slippery pitch. Bates shot wide from a free kick, Benning pushed the ball across the front of Wycombe's goal, and Merrick headed over the bar from a centre by Worley. All this happened within the first four minutes and set the pattern of an exciting match for the 8,821 spectators.

Both sides had obviously been instructed to shoot on every possible occasion, and the goalkeepers were continually in action, dealing with a ball which skidded awkwardly in the muddy goal areas. The first to make a mistake was Maskell.

After 24 minutes Paton made a sinuous dribble into the Wycombe penalty area. He shot hard against a post as he fell, and turned round just in time to watch Maskell punch the rebound into his own goal. This was bad luck for the amateurs, who had had most of the play.

CUNNING PASSES

But Wycombe were not behind long. Worley again started a move, Horseman shot and gained a corner, Bates put across one of his noted inswingers, and Samuels headed the equalizer.

Bedford attacked strongly after the interval. Royston slipped as he turned, and Fogg pounced on the loose ball and ran 25 yards with it—a long way in the mud. But he was foiled on the six-yard line by Maskell. Gale and Horseman went near as Bates continued to lob cunning long passes into the Bedford goal area. Sturrock replied with the hardest shot of the match. But defences prevailed in spite of hair-raising escapes.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS.—J. Maskell; J. Beck, P. Royston, B. Baker, I. Rundle, C. Gale, L. Worley, K. Samuels, P. Bates, A. Horseman, L. Merrick.

BEDFORD TOWN.—A. Collier; P. Morgan, D. Skinn; G. Willis, M. Collins, N. Cooley; D. Sturrock, R. Paton, C. Riley, R. Fogg, M. Benning.

REFEREE.—A. Dimond (Essex).